ONTARIO PARKS

Komoka

Preliminary Park Management Plan

Ian Seddon Planning Services and Anthony Usher Planning Consultant contributed to the preparation of this *Komoka Preliminary Park Management Plan* in cooperation with Ontario Parks' staff.

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Dear Madam or Sir:

Ontario Parks is preparing a park management plan for Komoka Provincial Park. As part of the planning process, I am pleased to present the *Komoka Preliminary Park Management Plan* for your review and comment.

This preliminary park management plan contains the proposed policies that will direct the long-term management of Komoka Provincial Park. It outlines the park's proposed classification, goal, objectives, boundaries, and zoning. It also presents proposed resource and recreation management policies, development and operations policies, and implementation priorities for the park.

I invite you to review and comment on this document. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*. Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, however your comments will become part of the record of consultation and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by the MNR to send you information about future MNR planning initiatives in the park area. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Brian Huis, Parks Planning Specialist, at (519) 873-4617.

Please submit your comments, or any requests for additional information, to:

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We will consider all comments in preparing the approved management plan.

I very much hope that you will take these opportunities to collaborate with us in planning the future of Komoka Provincial Park.

Yours truly,

A. Ireland-Smith

Oct. 31, 2007

Adair Ireland-Smith
Director
Ontario Parks

Date

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SUMMARY

Komoka Provincial Park is a valued natural and recreational area in the Thames River valley on the western edge of the City of London. Established in 1989, this 198 hectare (ha) area has been managed as a recreation class park with minimal facilities.

This preliminary park management plan contains the proposed policies that will direct the long-term management of Komoka Provincial Park. It outlines the park's proposed classification, goal, objectives, boundaries, and zoning. It also presents proposed resource and recreation management policies, development and operations policies, and implementation priorities for the park. As well, the preliminary plan summarizes the public consultation that has occurred since management planning started in 2001.

The following highlights of the preliminary park management plan are *proposed* policies and are subject to public review and comment.

The park's classification will be changed to natural environment. The goal for the park will be to protect Komoka's significant natural and cultural heritage, and provide high quality recreational and educational experiences appropriate to and sustainable within the park's environment.

The park will be expanded to include two parcels previously acquired for park purposes (see Figures 1 and 2), bringing the area of the park to 324 ha. Other lands may be acquired and added to the park in future, provided they meet the criteria described in the plan.

Most of the park's significant natural heritage features will be protected in nature reserve zones (261 ha). The rest of the park will be zoned as natural environment (59 ha) or access (4 ha). A new access point will be developed in Zone A1 and will replace the existing access points on Gideon Drive and Oxford Street (see Figures 1 and 2).

Ontario Parks will prepare a resource stewardship plan to guide management and restoration of landforms, vegetation, and wildlife. Aquatic life in the Thames River will be managed in partnership with other responsible agencies.

Horseback riding and mountain biking will only be permitted on designated trails for a two year period following the approval of the final *Komoka Park Management Plan*. After this time these activities will no longer be allowed in the park. No off-road vehicle use will be permitted. Dogs will be required to be on leash at all times.

Development in access zones will be limited to roads and parking, picnic sites and privies, and basic interpretive and management facilities. In the rest of the park, the only development will be trails and minimal interpretive facilities. Ontario Parks will prepare a trail management plan to determine which existing trails should be closed or relocated and what new trails should be developed.

Self-service collection of fees may be introduced if and when revenues would justify the costs of collection.

Your comments on the preliminary park management plan are welcome and may be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail (see contact information on page i of this document). For more information in French, please contact the Natural Resources Information Centre at 1-800-667-1840.

RÉSUMÉ

D'une superficie de 198 hectares, le parc provincial Komoka est une précieuse zone naturelle et récréative située dans la vallée de la rivière Thames, à l'extrémité ouest de London. Établi en 1989, il est pour l'instant classé dans la catégorie des parcs de loisirs ayant des installations minimes. Il est géré conformément aux règles associées à cette catégorie.

Le plan préliminaire expose ce qui est proposé pour gérer le parc provincial Komoka au cours des nombreuses prochaines années. Il décrit les propositions se rapportant aux objectifs, à la classification, aux limites et au zonage du parc. Il présente en outre les politiques proposées relativement à la gestion des ressources et des activités de loisir, à l'aménagement et au fonctionnement du parc, et aux priorités fixées pour le parc. Enfin, le plan préliminaire fait le point sur la consultation publique qui a eu lieu depuis le début des travaux d'élaboration du plan, en 2001.

Les points suivants, extraits du plan préliminaire, sont des *propositions* et feront l'objet d'un examen public qui permettra aux intéressés d'exprimer leurs points de vue.

Il est proposé de changer la classification du parc. Le parc serait mis dans la catégorie des parcs de conservation des milieux naturels. L'objectif serait de protéger les importants patrimoines naturel et culturel du parc, en plus de favoriser d'excellentes activités récréatives et éducatives conciliables avec les milieux naturels du parc.

Le parc serait élargi. Y seraient ajoutées deux parcelles déjà acquises à cette fin (voir les figures 1 et 2), ce qui porterait la superficie à 324 hectares. D'autres terrains pourraient plus tard être acquis et ajoutés au parc, pourvu qu'ils remplissent les conditions décrites dans le plan.

La plupart des aspects du patrimoine naturel du parc seraient protégés dans des réserves naturelles (261 hectares). Le reste du parc serait réparti en zones de conservation des milieux naturels (59 hectares) et en zones d'accès (4 hectares). Un nouveau point d'accès, qui serait aménagé dans la zone A1, remplacerait les points d'accès actuels qui se trouvent aux rues Gideon Drive et Oxford (voir les figures 1 et 2).

Parcs Ontario rédigera un plan de protection des ressources, qui guidera les travaux de gestion et de remise en état des sols, de la végétation et de la faune. La vie aquatique dans la rivière Thames sera gérée en coopération avec d'autres agences sur lesquelles retombe cette responsabilité.

L'équitation et le cyclisme de montagne ne seraient autorisés que sur les sentiers désignés à cette fin. Ils le seraient pour une période de deux ans après l'adoption officielle du *Plan de gestion du parc Komoka*. Après cette période, ces activités ne seront plus permises dans le parc. Aucun véhicule automobile tout terrain ne sera autorisé dans le parc. Les chiens devront être tenus en laisse en tout temps.

Dans les zones d'accès, l'aménagement se limiterait à des routes, à des places de stationnement, à des places de pique-nique, à des toilettes et à des installations minimes associées à la découverte de la nature et à la gestion du parc. Dans le reste du parc, l'aménagement consisterait uniquement en des sentiers et en des stations de découverte de la nature. Celles-ci seraient réduites à l'essentiel. Parcs Ontario rédigera un plan de gestion des

sentiers pour déterminer les sentiers qui seront fermés ou déplacés, et les nouveaux sentiers qui seront aménagés.

Des guichets libre-service seraient installés s'il s'avère que les recettes justifieraient les dépenses reliées à la perception du prix des billets.

Les points de vue au sujet du plan préliminaire sont les bienvenus. On peut les communiquer par la poste, par télécopieur ou par courriel (voir les coordonnées à la page i du présent document). On peut obtenir de l'information en français en appelant le Centre d'information sur les ressources naturelles, au 1 800 667-1840.

FOREWORD

This Preliminary Park Management Plan

Ontario Parks began work on a management plan for Komoka Provincial Park with the release of terms of reference in summer 2001. In the second stage of the planning process, *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* was produced and distributed for public review. Production and public review of this preliminary park management plan will complete the third stage of planning.

The study area for park management planning is larger than Komoka Provincial Park. It includes other lands acquired by the Ministry of Natural Resources for park purposes, and more generally, the area bounded by Oxford Street and Glendon Drive on the north, Woodhull Road on the east, Gideon Drive on the south, and Komoka Road on the west.

For ease of review, this preliminary park management plan is worded in the style of an approved park management plan (such as, "Ontario Parks will . . ."). However, this document is a ***proposed*** plan and all aspects of it are subject to public review and comment.

Based on the public input received, Ontario Parks will prepare, approve, and distribute the park management plan for Komoka Provincial Park.

MNR's Strategic Directions and Statement of Environmental Values

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is responsible for managing Ontario's natural resources in accordance with the laws it administers. As the province's lead conservation agency, MNR is the steward of provincial parks, other protected areas, forests, fisheries, wildlife, mineral aggregates, petroleum, and the Crown lands and waters that make up 87% of Ontario.

The Ministry of Natural Resources' Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* (EBR). It describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions are made which might significantly affect the environment.

The primary purpose of the EBR is "to protect, conserve and, where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment". From the MNR's perspective, that broad statement of purpose translates into four objectives in its SEV:

- to ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- to ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- to protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and
- to protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

In 2005, MNR released *Our Sustainable Future*, which reconfirms the Ministry's vision of sustainable development and its mission of managing Ontario's natural resources in an ecologically sustainable manner, and formally commits MNR to biodiversity conservation. The strategic directions of *Our Sustainable Future* are considered in all MNR land use and resource management planning.

During the development of this preliminary park management plan, MNR has considered both of these documents. This preliminary park management plan is intended to reflect the directions set out in them, and to further the objectives of managing Ontario's resources on an ecologically sustainable basis.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

> "The land is much more interesting than may appear (on a map) because of the grandness of the relief within it and the geomorphological history of it. The [Thames] river is deeply entrenched and forms therefore a beautiful valley with steeply sloping and heavily wooded valley sides interspersed with raw and exposed clifflike banks to 125 feet in height. To add to the interest of this wilderness river core, the land to the southeast of the river is higher than that to the north by as much as 60 feet offering contrasting impressions depending on which side of the river one is on. Looking south across the river one is looking into a forested wall. Looking north across the river, one has the long birdseye view of the land and the feeling of great height, a rather unique aspect in the flat lands of SW Ontario." - Osmond Langtvet, *A Proposal for the Establishment of a Wilderness Park Straddling the Thames River between the Kilworth and Komoka Bridges, Delaware and Lobo Townships, Middlesex County, Ontario*, 1964.

These attributes of what is now Komoka Provincial Park inspired Dr. Langtvet, a University of Western Ontario geography professor, to make this first known proposal for protecting Komoka. Dr. Langtvet knew that Komoka was significant in several ways, which have become better understood and appreciated over the 40 years since:

- The Thames valley is the park's most significant landscape feature. The park contains the best example of the valley's distinct topography southwest of London. The raised (former) beaches of the glacial lakes that preceded the Thames are a provincially significant earth science feature;

- The Thames River is one of Southern Ontario's major rivers. In 2000, it was designated a Canadian Heritage River following submission and acceptance of *The Thames Strategy: Managing the Thames as a Canadian Heritage River*;

- The naturally vegetated corridor along the river includes a variety of shoreline, wetland, forest, and meadow habitats, which together constitute a provincially significant life science feature;

- The park is, or has the potential to be, home to several plant, butterfly, reptile, bird, mammal, and fish species at risk. (In this plan, "species at risk" are as defined and listed

by MNR in its *Species at Risk in Ontario List*. Species observations cited are as of April 2004 and are subject to change.);

- The park is a key natural core along the Thames River corridor and is the largest remaining natural area within 15 kilometres (km) of downtown London. It has been a valued natural recreation area for London area residents since the 1970s; and

- The park is one of the major remaining stretches of riparian forest and adjoining upland forest in southwestern Ontario, and plays a crucial role as a corridor for plant dispersal and wildlife migration.

Osmond Langtvet's 1964 proposal caught the interest of the County of Middlesex and eventually the Ontario Government. In 1974, the province announced that a near-urban recreation class provincial park would be established, and began to acquire land.

Although several near-urban provincial parks were considered in the early 1970s, only one was actually developed, Bronte Creek in Oakville. As a result of financial constraints, landowner opposition, and changing priorities, land acquisition at Komoka was slow, and no major facilities were developed.

In 1989, Komoka Provincial Park was legally established, to include the Thames River between the Oxford Street/Glendon Drive and Komoka Road bridges, and all the lands acquired south of the Thames, totalling 198 ha. Lands acquired for park purposes north of the Thames are not part of the regulated park. Komoka has since been managed as a non-operating park, with minimal facilities and no fee collection. Current estimated park visitation is 50,000 users per year.

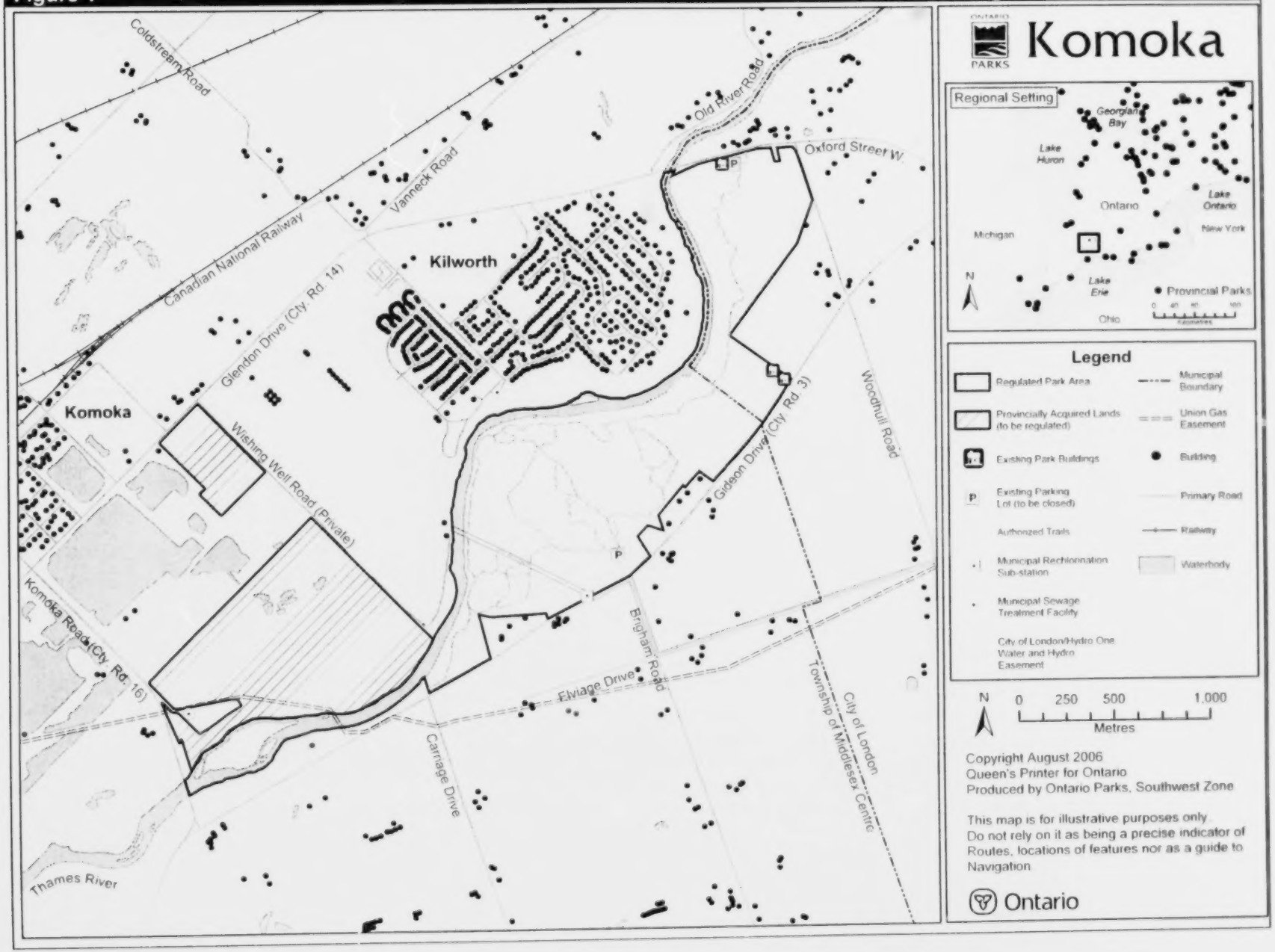
Most of the park is adjacent to the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, while the easternmost part abuts the City of London. Figure 1 shows the park's setting within southwestern Ontario, and its relationship to other provincial parks.

Detailed information on the park's setting, facilities, natural and cultural heritage, market area, and current uses is provided in the *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* document, available from Ontario Parks.

The approved park management plan supersedes the 1979 *Kilworth/Komoka Public Lands (Park Reserve) Interim Management Statement*, and will guide the long-term protection, development, management, and operation of Komoka Provincial Park. Section 10 describes the process for review and amendment of the approved management plan.

Nothing in this plan shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection provided for the existing Aboriginal or treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada as recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Figure 1 **Local Setting & Existing Development**



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Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of Routes, locations of features nor as a guide to Navigation

Ontario

2.0 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* document:

- outlined 21 planning and management issues that should be addressed by the park management plan; and
- described four alternative concepts for the park's future, including the most appropriate classification, boundaries, and management and development direction for each alternative.

This section of the preliminary park management plan discusses the issues that were most commented on during public review of the *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* document, and summarizes how the plan will deal with those issues. The issues are listed in the order they appear in Section 5 of *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options*. For more information on how the plan responds to each issue, please refer to the sections indicated. For details on the public consultation conducted, see Section 11.1.

There was not enough comment on the four alternative concepts to indicate a clearly preferred alternative.

Komoka Background Information, Issues and Options: Summary of Public Response (June 2004) provides more detail on public response and is available from Ontario Parks.

2.1 Classification

Comments Most respondents on this issue felt that Komoka should no longer be classed as a recreation park, but were divided between natural environment and nature reserve as a preferred alternative.

Response *(see also Section 3.1)* Komoka will be classed as a natural environment park.

2.2 Boundaries

Comments Few comments were received on this issue, but the greatest support was for maintaining the existing park boundary. Some respondents advocated various scenarios involving adding the acquired lands and, in some cases, private lands.

Response *(see also Section 4.1)* The park will be expanded, but only to include those lands already acquired by MNR for park purposes. Any other lands that MNR may acquire in future in accordance with the criteria in Section 4.1 would be added to the park at that time.

2.3 Access

Comments There was no clear preference for any approach.

Response *(see also Section 5.4)* There will be two formal access points to the park. The existing access points south of the Thames, on Oxford Street and Gideon Drive, will be

closed over time and replaced with an improved access area farther east on Gideon Drive. A single access south of the Thames will be more efficient to manage, and the Oxford Street access is not ideally located in terms of traffic safety. To provide access to the lands to be added to the park north of the Thames, the existing access off Komoka Road will be improved.

2.4 Uses

Comments Respondents urged that trail uses which they felt were in conflict should be better separated or not permitted.

Response *(see also Section 7.3)* The plan will reduce conflicts and enhance public safety by prohibiting horseback riding and mountain biking, and requiring that a trail management plan be prepared.

2.5 Development

Comments There was a strong "keep the park as it is" sentiment among respondents. In particular, major day use facilities, camping facilities, and a golf course were mentioned as inappropriate.

Response *(see also Table 1 and Section 8)* Development will be limited to facilities necessary to better support existing low intensity day use activities: trail recreation, canoeing, fishing, and nature appreciation.

2.6 Trails

Comments Respondents recommended that the trail network be improved, particularly by eliminating duplicate trails and removing trails from locations where they may impair park values. Most of those commenting on horseback riding endorsed continuing this activity with no or some restrictions. Most of those commenting on mountain biking advocated prohibiting this activity, or continuing it with restrictions.

Response *(see also Section 7.3)* A trail management plan will ensure that trails are located so as to provide better circulation, allow for more efficient maintenance, and better protect park values. Consistent with most trails being located in nature reserve zones, horseback riding and mountain biking will be prohibited.

2.7 Prohibited Uses

Comments Most respondents urged that activities currently prohibited in provincial parks be more effectively prohibited, specifically dogs off-leash and off-road vehicle use. Many also advocated partial or complete prohibition of dogs on-leash.

Response *(see also Table 1)* Existing prohibitions under Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act,* and its regulations, will be more effectively communicated and enforced. The plan will also indicate that the park superintendent has the authority to restrict or prohibit any use (which includes dogs on-leash) at any time, if required to protect park values or public safety.

2.8 Natural Heritage Protection

Comments Respondents strongly emphasized the need to better protect the park's natural heritage values. Though not mentioned in *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options*, white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) overpopulation and its impact on vegetation was identified as an associated issue by a number of respondents.

Response *(see also Sections 5.2, 6, and 7)* Almost all of the provincially significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) which encompass the park's most significant natural heritage features will be included in nature reserve zones. Natural heritage protection will also be accomplished through a variety of management plan measures, including the trail management plan, prohibition of horseback riding and mountain biking, more effective prohibition of nonconforming uses, and restoration plans for currently disturbed areas. A park operating plan will ensure that staffing and enforcement are consistent with provincial standards. There is not yet sufficient evidence for the management plan to require deer population reduction. However, the management plan will indicate that the park superintendent has the general authority to control overabundant animal populations when essential to protect natural heritage values, and will encourage further research into deer overpopulation.

3.0 PARK POLICIES

3.1 Classification

Komoka Provincial Park, formerly classed as a recreation park, will now be classed as a natural environment park, one of six classes of parks in the Ontario provincial parks system. The other classes are wilderness, waterway, nature reserve, and historical.

Natural environment parks incorporate outstanding recreational landscapes with representative natural features and historical resources to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences.

3.2 Goal

The goal for the park is:

- *To protect Komoka Provincial Park's significant natural and cultural heritage, and provide high quality recreational and natural heritage educational experiences appropriate to and ecologically sustainable within the park's environment.*

3.3 Objectives

Ontario's Protected Areas system has four objectives for establishing and managing provincial parks, as stated in Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*:

- to permanently protect representative ecosystems, biodiversity and provincially significant elements of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage and to manage these areas to ensure that ecological integrity is maintained;

- to provide opportunities for ecologically sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities and encourage associated economic benefits;
- to provide opportunities for residents of Ontario and visitors to increase their knowledge and appreciation of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage; and
- to facilitate scientific research and to provide points of reference to support monitoring of ecological change on the broader landscape.

As a natural environment park, Komoka will contribute to all four objectives. Komoka contributes to these objectives in the following ways.

3.3.1 *Protection*

For park system planning purposes, Ontario is divided into 71 ecodistricts (formerly known as ecological site districts) based on landforms and biological productivity. Park establishment is designed to be representative of the ecodistricts in which they are found. The target is to establish at least one natural environment park in each ecodistrict. Komoka and The Pinery Provincial Parks are the two natural environment parks in Ecodistrict 7E-2, and protect natural environments representative of this ecodistrict. The specific significant features protected in the park's nature reserve zones are described in Section 5.2.

Protection will not be limited to provincially significant features. The entire park will be maintained as a healthy, diverse, and sustainable natural environment, consistent with achieving the park's other objectives. Degraded environments will be restored wherever possible.

Protection will also be accomplished through an ecosystem management approach that recognizes the ecological, social, and economic influence that the surrounding area has on the park. This is particularly important at Komoka given the park's proximity to London and the increasing urbanization of the surrounding landscape. Policies of this plan that address issues beyond the park boundary will be based on cooperation and partnership. These policies will not intervene in local affairs or restrict private property rights beyond the mandate of the *Planning Act*.

3.3.2 *Ecologically Sustainable Outdoor Recreation*

Walking, fishing, and canoeing are expected to continue to be the principal recreational activities in the park. Ontario Parks will seek to increase day use in an ecologically sustainable manner by improving trail and access facilities.

3.3.3 *Increased Knowledge and Appreciation*

To the extent that it is compatible with the park's protection objective, Ontario Parks will provide self-guided facilities and programs to enhance existing and future opportunities for unstructured individual exploration and appreciation.

3.3.4 *Scientific Research and Monitoring*

Research by qualified individuals that contributes to knowledge of natural and cultural history and to environmental and recreational management of the park will be encouraged.

Inventories and monitoring may be conducted, as necessary, to provide information to support planning and management decisions intended to ensure the ecological sustainability of the park.

4.0 BOUNDARY AND LAND TENURE

Any boundary change, land acquisition, or land disposition will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* approved under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

4.1 Boundary

Figure 1 shows the boundary of Komoka Provincial Park as established in 1989 by Ontario Regulation 290/89 under the former *Provincial Parks Act*[1]. Figure 2 shows the park boundary as the Ontario Government intends to amend it by regulation. The policies of this plan are based on the proposed park boundary shown in Figure 2.

Amending the boundary will add to the park two parcels acquired by MNR for park purposes:

- a former gravel pit immediately north of the Thames River; and
- a woodlot on Glendon Drive, separated from the rest of the park.

It is estimated that with the addition of these parcels the expanded park will be approximately 324 ha in area.

Engineering reviews conducted in 2001 of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre and City of London water supply systems determined that drinking water for the community of Delaware should be provided from London, through existing mains along Gideon Drive. It was also determined that a rechlorination facility was needed, and that it would be best located on park lands abutting the Gideon Drive road allowance. Ontario Parks agreed to this proposal, which would require removing from the park about 100 m² abutting Gideon Drive west of Brigham Road (see Figure 1), and conveying it to the Municipality. This will be reflected in the amended boundary. With authorization from Ontario Parks, the Municipality built the facility in 2003.

MNR will consider acquiring other land and adding it to the park, subject to the following criteria:

- the seller is willing;
- funds are available;
- the land abuts the park or is separated from it only by a municipal road allowance; and
- the land is one or more of the following:
  - within a provincially significant ANSI;
  - habitat for species at risk;

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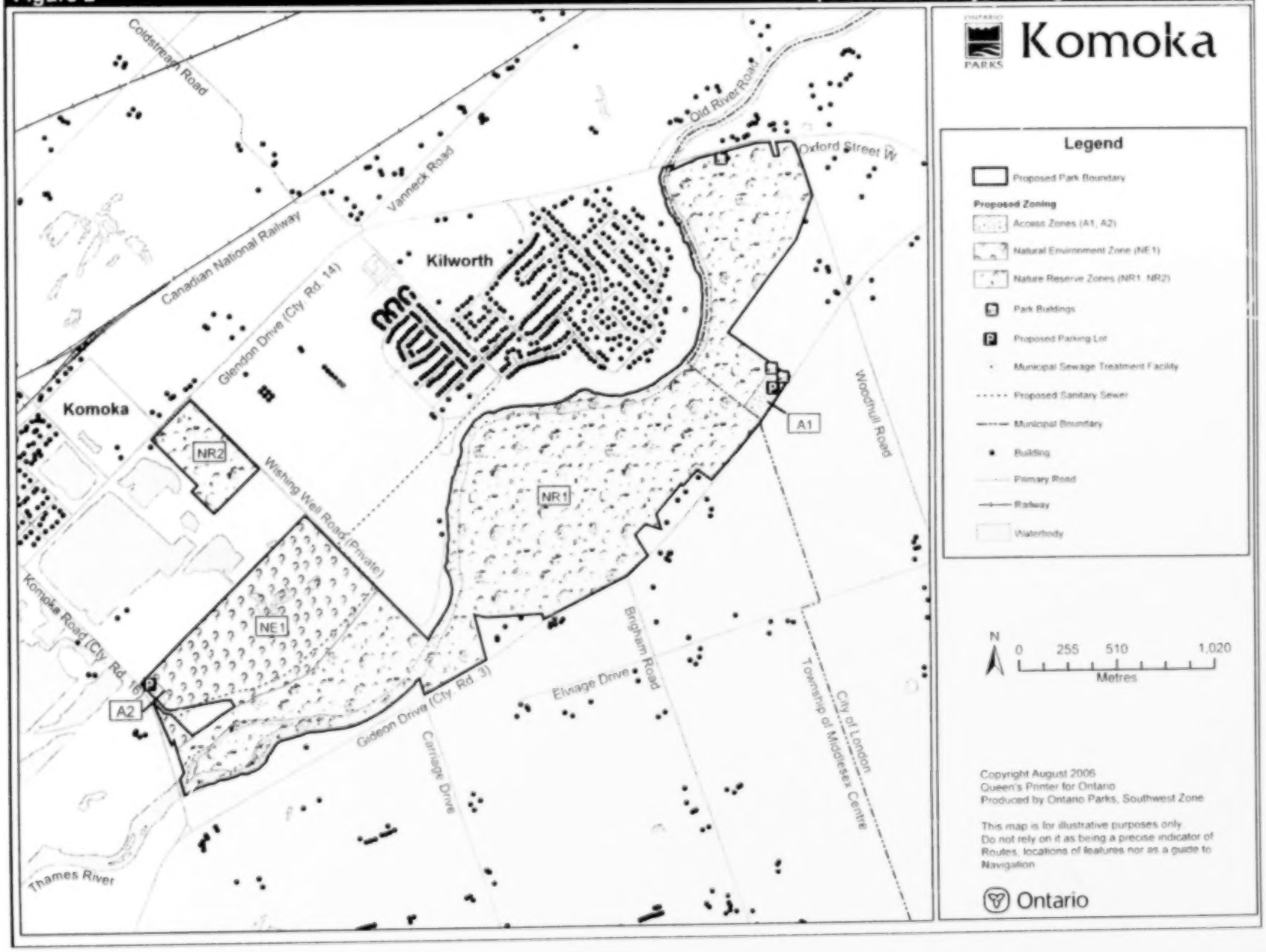
[1] Now Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*.

Figure 2 **Proposed Boundary, Zoning and Development**



- as a result of how its resources are managed, adversely affecting natural heritage values in the park;
- a potential buffer that would better protect natural heritage values in the park;
- a potential link between the Glendon Drive woodlot and the rest of the park;
- a potential link in a natural heritage corridor; and/or
- a potential contributor to improving public access to the park.

The bed of the Thames River is Crown land. MNR will consider adding portions of the river above Oxford Street/Glendon Drive and below Komoka Road to the park to protect habitat for aquatic species at risk.

As shown on Figures 1 and 2, there is an area of land just east of Komoka Road that is almost entirely surrounded by, but is not part of, the former gravel pit to be added to the park. This is owned by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, and consists of a municipal sewage treatment facility and a road allowance providing access to it. If at some point the Municipality no longer needs this land for this purpose, MNR will consider acquiring it subject to the above criteria.

Where development or site alteration is proposed for abutting lands, as part of its input to the planning review process Ontario Parks may seek conditions of approval requiring applicants to mitigate potential adverse impacts by, for example, setting development back from the park boundary and/or providing appropriate fencing along the boundary. Otherwise, the park superintendent will clearly define the park boundary by signage, planting, or fencing as appropriate, where needed to protect park values and achieve the policies of this plan, or where requested by abutting owners, all in accordance with any applicable requirements of the *Line Fences Act*. Fencing will be designed so as to minimize interference with wildlife movement. Open pedestrian access will be maintained to the Thames Valley Trail as described in Section 7.3.

The former gravel pit and woodlot to be added to the park are bounded on the east by a private road, known as Wishing Well Road. This private road forms the western edge of lands that will be developed as the community of Kilworth grows. As part of its input to the planning review process for these lands, Ontario Parks may seek a condition of approval requiring the applicant to provide an easement or right-of-way over Wishing Well Road giving Ontario Parks access to the park for management purposes. Public access will not be provided from Wishing Well Road.

4.2 Land Tenure

This plan recognizes the following continuing uses of park lands, as shown on Figure 1:

- Union Gas holds an easement for a gas transmission pipeline right-of-way that crosses the west end of the park; and

- The City of London holds an easement for a water main from wells on the north side of the Thames River, to Gideon Drive. Hydro One Networks Inc. holds an easement for a power line along the same route, to provide electricity to the wells. The wells, main, and power line may be decommissioned, and if this happens, both easements would be surrendered and rehabilitated.

Ontario Parks and the Municipality of Middlesex Centre have been discussing since 1995 the location of a new sanitary sewer, from Kilworth to the sewage treatment facility east of Komoka Road. This sewer would cross the former gravel pit being added to the park (see Figure 2). Ontario Parks has agreed to provide an easement to the Municipality for this purpose. The easement would be located so as to minimize adverse effects on natural and cultural heritage values, and the Municipality would be required to undertake all appropriate rehabilitation.

Any future disposition of land not described in Sections 4.1 or 4.2 will require a plan amendment.

4.3 The Bigger Picture

In 1964, when Osmond Langtvet first proposed a park at Komoka, the City of London's population was about 185,000, and that of Middlesex County including the City, about 240,000. Both are now within sight of doubling their populations. By 2021, the City is expected to reach about 425,000, and the County plus City, about 515,000. The landscape around the park, essentially rural in 1964, will continue to urbanize.

Other public infrastructure developments expected over the next 20 years in the area include:

- widening of Oxford Street to Commissioners Road;
- a possible ring road expressway that would extend north from Highway 402 and pass just east of the park; and
- expansion of the sewage treatment facility east of Komoka Road, and construction of a new sewer to it as described in Section 4.2.

In this context, it is essential to recognize that Komoka Provincial Park may progressively become more insular as surrounding developments proceed. In this case, Komoka Provincial Park's role as a core area with a broader landscape level ecosystem becomes increasingly more important. Figure 4 in *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* shows Komoka in relation to existing and potential natural cores and corridors in central Middlesex.

Most of the park contains natural heritage features and areas defined by the *Provincial Policy Statement* under the *Planning Act*. Municipalities are required to be consistent with provincial policy that natural heritage features and areas are to be protected from incompatible development on adjacent lands. Provincial policy also requires municipalities to consider the impacts of planning decisions on provincial parks. MNR will recommend to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the Municipality of Middlesex Centre and the City of London be asked to ensure that their official plans fully identify the park's lands, waters, and natural heritage features, so that new development near the park is assessed with regard to any potential impacts on the park and its natural heritage values in accordance with provincial policy.

Also, the *Provincial Policy Statement* requires municipalities to be consistent with the policy that "the diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural

heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features". Natural heritage systems may include lands that have been restored and areas with the potential to be restored to a natural state, as well as currently identified natural heritage features. MNR will work with other ministries and municipalities to promote planning policies that, by implementing this *Provincial Policy Statement* direction in the park's surrounding area, will enhance Komoka's contribution to the biodiversity of the deciduous (Carolinian) forest region of Ontario.

5.0 PARK ZONING

5.1 Zoning Policy

The lands and waters of Komoka Provincial Park are zoned on the basis of their significance for protection and potential for recreation and development. There are two nature reserve, one natural environment, and two access zones in the park, as shown on Figure 2.

A natural environment class park may include three other zone types. However, Komoka is far too small to accommodate a wilderness zone, does not have known cultural heritage features currently requiring distinct management in a historical zone, and will not support recreational development intensive enough to warrant a development zone. Care has been taken to ensure that the paramount objective of protecting park heritage is achieved by zoning the park predominantly nature reserve, with some natural environment and very limited access zoning. This will recognize the park's significant features, provide protection for any undiscovered cultural values as well as ensure accountability for their management.

The following sections briefly describe each zone. The resource uses, recreational uses, and types of development permitted in each type of zone are shown in Table 1. All resource and recreational uses and facility development will be subject to the legislation and policies governing provincial parks and public lands and resources, as well as the policies in Sections 3, 7, and 8.

5.2 Nature Reserve Zones

Nature reserve zones include significant earth and life science features which require management distinct from that in adjacent zones, as well as a protective buffer with a minimum of development. The park's two nature reserve zones include about 261 ha (81%) of the total park area.

5.2.1 *Zone NR1 - Thames Valley* (246 ha)

This zone protects over three-quarters of the park and includes most of the park's significant natural heritage features. The park includes parts of two provincially significant ANSIs, all of which are included in Zone NR1:

- Komoka Park Reserve and Adjacent Lands life science ANSI; and
- Komoka Shorelines earth science ANSI (referred to in *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* as Komoka Provincial Park earth science ANSI).

Zone NR1 protects the following species at risk:

- one plant species of special concern;
- one butterfly species of special concern, which breeds in the park;
- three threatened reptile species and one of special concern;
- two bird species of special concern, which used to nest in the park and could return;
- one endangered mammal species and one of special concern; and
- one threatened fish species and three of special concern, which are found in the stretch of the Thames River within the park.

This zone also provides good habitat for migrating birds. Several bird species at risk have been known to visit the park.

Zone NR1 includes recently cultivated areas that may be suitable for continued active management as meadows. These areas provide suitable habitat for a number of significant wildlife and insect species in addition to possibly providing critical habitat for at least one species at risk.

The zone also includes all of the park's several tufa deposits (porous rock formations produced by the deposition of excess calcium carbonate in hard spring water). Some of these deposits are continuing to form, and all are quite fragile. Tufa deposits are uncommon in the provincial park system and merit protection.

Zone NR1 includes all of the Thames River within the park. The Thames portion of the park will be freely accessible from upstream and downstream and will continue to be used by canoeists and motorboaters. The zone also includes all of the Thames Valley Trail within the park, which will continue to be accessible to hikers.

This zone also includes the existing park access points on Gideon Drive at Brigham Road, and on Oxford Street just east of the Thames River. Both parking lots will be closed when the Zone A1 access point is developed. These are recognized as nonconforming facilities for as long as they are required.

Pedestrian access will continue to be allowed from both Oxford Street and Gideon Drive where the Thames Valley Trail connects to the park's system of trails.

5.2.2 *Zone NR2 - Glendon Drive Woodlot* (15 ha)

Zone NR2 protects a healthy black oak woodlot and a small area of old field meadow. While it is not known to protect any species at risk, it is suitable habitat for woodland species such as red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus)*, red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus)*, and southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans)*. This zone also has potential value as a natural core for landscape restoration if any of the lands between it and the rest of the park are ever acquired.

5.3 Natural Environment Zone

Natural environment zones include natural, cultural, and aesthetic landscapes in which minimum development is required to support low-intensity recreational activities. The park's one natural environment zone includes about 59 ha (18%) of the total park area.

5.3.1 *Zone NE1 - The Ponds* (59 ha)

This zone, the unforested portion of a former gravel pit, consists of meadows, and some ponds where gravel excavations have naturally refilled. Although an interesting aquatic community has developed in the ponds, the ponds reflect the state of rehabilitation when the pit closed, and they may not be optimally located in terms of overland drainage from outside the park or long-term restoration objectives. The zone also provides a buffer between Zone NR1 and Zone A2.

5.4 Access Zones

Access zones serve as staging areas where minimum facilities support the use of the park. The park's two access zones include about 4 ha (1%) of the total park area. There is no water surface in the access zones.

Development that may take place in the access zones is described in Section 8.

5.4.1 *Zone A1 - Gideon Drive* (3 ha)

This zone will provide for development of a new access point, which would be the only formal access to the park south of the Thames River. When this facility is developed, the two existing access points, both within Zone NR1, will be closed.

5.4.2 *Zone A2 - Komoka Road* (1 ha)

This zone includes the existing informal access to the former gravel pit, and will provide for its improvement. This will be the only formal access to the park north of the Thames River.

The park superintendent has the authority under Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* to close any part of the park, land or water, to any use, or to restrict any use, for any period of time. In public use areas, this authority would only be used to protect species at risk or other park values, to repair or replace park facilities, or to ensure public safety.

TABLE 1 PERMITTED USES AND DEVELOPMENT

	Nature reserve zones	Natural environment zone	Access zones
Recreational uses permitted [1]			
Canoeing	Y/NR1		
Motorboating	Y/NR1[2]		
Walking	Y	Y	Y
Cross-country skiing	Y	Y	Y
Sport fishing	Y/NR1		
Heritage appreciation	Y	Y	Y
Development permitted			
Walking trails	Y	Y	Y
Basic day use facilities [3]			Y
Interpretive facilities	Y[4]	Y[4]	Y
Park research and management facilities	Y[4]	Y[4]	Y[4]
Visitor information and service facilities			Y[4]
Access roads and parking			Y
Union Gas easement	Y[5]	Y[5]	
Municipal water main easement	Y[5]		
Municipal sanitary sewer easement		Y[6]	

Notes to Table 1

Y Permitted.

Y/xx/ Permitted in zone xx only.

Y/xx/^{n} Permitted in zone xx only, and only under the conditions in note n.

blank Not permitted or not possible.

1 Only those recreational uses of interest to the largest numbers of people are listed here. Other uses will be permitted or prohibited by analogy to the uses listed, or in accordance with the planning and management policies for natural environment parks. For example, kayaking will be treated in the same way as canoeing; snowshoeing, in the same way as cross-country skiing.

2 Recognized as a continuing nonconforming use on the Thames River.

3 Individual picnic sites, privies, etc.

4 Minimal facilities only.

5 Recognized as a continuing nonconforming use.

6 Will be recognized as a nonconforming use.

6.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Ontario Parks will manage Komoka Provincial Park in accordance with the policies for natural environment parks as set out in *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies*, and the specific policies of this plan. An adaptive management approach will be applied to resource management activities within the park. Adaptive management allows for frequent modification of planning and management strategies as better information becomes available. These modifications are based on new scientific findings, experience, and changing social expectations and demands.

Ontario Parks will prepare a resource stewardship plan to guide management and restoration of landforms, vegetation, species at risk, and fish and wildlife habitat. The stewardship plan will specify appropriate techniques, and identify priority areas for their application. Along with the policies in Section 6, specific principles to be adhered to in preparing the resource stewardship plan will include the following:

- The aim of management and restoration will be to:
  - in nature reserve zones, perpetuate the natural heritage values which the zone has been established to protect;
  - in natural environment zones, protect significant natural heritage values that are present, and in the long term, restore natural features and ecological functions; and
  - in access zones, protect significant natural heritage values that are present.

- "Management and restoration" will generally mean maintaining natural environments in, or restoring them to, their historic[2] condition as nearly as possible, at which point those environments will be left to evolve naturally and without human interference, except as specifically prescribed in this plan. In some cases, continuing active management to maintain a particular habitat condition or stage of natural succession that does not represent original conditions (for example, an old field) may be justified if it contributes to the park's overall biodiversity.

- Natural processes will be used except where other approaches are specifically prescribed by this plan.

- Priority will be given to restoration techniques that are judged to be most likely to succeed and to have the most substantial positive impact relative to cost.

- Visitor education will be fundamental to successful implementation.

6.1 Land and Water Management

Old post and wire farm fences within the park boundary pose a potential safety hazard and will be removed, starting with those nearest trails and other higher use areas.

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[2] "Historic condition" means natural conditions before European settlement (sometimes described in original township survey notes). It embodies not only natural succession and an absence of post-settlement human interference, but also the original quality, integrity, and diversity of the environment.

Wherever possible, new development or redevelopment will be undertaken so as not to disrupt natural drainage, and the resource stewardship plan will seek to restore natural drainage where it has been disrupted by past or present development. The resource stewardship plan will also consider reconfiguring the landforms and water features in Zone NE1 so as to better restore natural features and ecological functions.

Waste consisting of natural materials will be reused or composted inside the park where feasible and appropriate. Otherwise, all solid waste will be removed from the park for recycling or disposal.

6.2 Vegetation Management

As indicated in Section 5.2.1, the park is home to a plant species at risk. This species at risk and its habitat, and any others identified or listed in future, will be protected as if they were designated under the *Endangered Species Act* and this plan and all implementation plans must be consistent with this aim. Where active management is required for the recovery of a species at risk, it will be undertaken in accordance with the resource stewardship plan, and any national recovery strategy for the species developed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

In that part of Zone NR1 that is within the Komoka Park Reserve and Adjacent Lands life science ANSI, removal of planted conifers will be a long-term objective to be addressed through a resource stewardship plan. In the rest of the park, a resource stewardship plan will determine whether planted conifers should be removed, thinned, or left alone.

Additional non-native plant species will not be deliberately introduced to the park. In this plan, "non-native species" means species not native to Ontario. If established non-native plant species threaten natural heritage values, a program for their eradication will be developed, subject to specific policies elsewhere in this section of the plan.

Missing native plant species may be re-established, and existing stands of native species replenished, in accordance with the resource stewardship plan. Existing stands may also be replenished where necessary to rehabilitate disturbed areas expected to sustain continuing heavy use (such as trails). Planting will use seed stocks native to the park or area wherever possible.

Except where they threaten public safety, dead trees will be left standing to serve as important homes for cavity-nesting birds and mammals. Live or dead trees and brush may be cut, pruned, or removed only:

- to enable resource management or facility development specifically authorized by this plan or by an approved implementation plan;
- to ensure public safety; and
- in the utility easements specified in Section 4.2.

Trees and brush cut in nature reserve and natural environment zones outside of conifer plantations will be left to deteriorate naturally as close as possible to where they have been felled. Trees and brush cut in conifer plantations and access zones will be left to deteriorate naturally as close as possible to where they have been felled, or used for wood chips in the park.

Consideration will be given within the resource stewardship plan to perpetuating fire-dependent ecosystems in the park through prescribed burning, mowing, and/or other habitat management techniques.

Fires that pose a threat to public health and safety, property and infrastructure, or other values will receive a full response and will be suppressed. Suppression techniques that have the least residual impact on the park's environment will be used wherever practical.

Native insects and diseases affecting vegetation will be allowed to progress naturally, except where they threaten significant natural heritage values, in which cases they will be controlled where feasible. Non-native insects and diseases will be controlled where feasible. Where control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease so as to have minimal effects on the rest of the park's environment. Biological controls will be used whenever possible.

Chemical fertilizers will not be used in the park. Chemical herbicides, pesticides, and suppressants will not be used for any vegetation management purpose except:

- insect and disease control and fire suppression under the conditions set out in this section of the plan;
- eradication of non-native species, where it has been demonstrated that other methods with less residual impact on the park's environment are not feasible; and
- control of poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*) in access zones.

6.3 Fish and Wildlife Management

As indicated in Section 5.2.1, the park is home to several animal species at risk. Species at risk will be protected consistent with the *Endangered Species Act* and regulations. Species found within a recommended or regulated provincial park that have been identified on the Species At Risk in Ontario list by MNR as Endangered (not regulated), Threatened or Special Concern will be afforded the same level of protection as an Endangered species listed in regulation under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Habitat for species at risk may be enhanced through the installation of artificial habitat features such as nesting boxes and hibernacula. Where this or any other active management is required for the recovery of a species at risk, it will be undertaken in accordance with the resource stewardship plan, and any national recovery strategy for the species developed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (or corresponding provincial recovery strategy if the species is designated by Ontario only).

The fisheries of the Thames River within the park will be managed by MNR in accordance with the recognized legislation, regulations, policies, plans, initiatives or programs prevailing for the river as a whole. Wherever possible, fisheries management will seek to maintain native, self-sustaining fish populations (in this plan, "fisheries" and "fish" have the same meanings as in the federal *Fisheries Act*, that is, they refer to all marine animal life).

An aquatic ecosystem recovery strategy and action plan is currently being developed for the Thames River by a partnership of the Governments of Ontario (led by MNR) and Canada, the Upper Thames River and Lower Thames Valley conservation authorities, and the river's Aboriginal governments. Ontario Parks will do its part in implementing the approved strategy

and action plan within Komoka and will ensure that all implementation plans complement and support it.

Additional non-native animal species will not be deliberately introduced to the park. If already established non-native species threaten park values, a program for their eradication may be developed if feasible and practical. Missing native species may be reintroduced, and existing populations replenished, in accordance with the resource stewardship plan. This park-wide policy does not apply to the Thames River fisheries.

Animal populations, including invasive domestic animals, may be controlled when essential to protect human health and safety, natural heritage values, or the health of species outside the park. Control may include the reduction of overabundant populations when essential to protect natural heritage values. A strategy for reduction of overabundant populations may be developed as part of the resource stewardship plan. When animal control is necessary, techniques will be used that have minimal effects on the rest of the park's environment. Any hunting, trapping, or other control measures will be carried out directly by, or under the supervision of, Ontario Parks.

Opportunities for fish and wildlife viewing may be encouraged in the park.

Commercial trapping is not permitted in the park.

6.3.1 *Species at Risk*

Species at risk will be protected consistent with the *Endangered Species Act* and regulations. Species found within a recommended or regulated provincial park that have been identified on the Species At Risk in Ontario list by MNR as "endangered (not regulated)", "threatened" or "special concern" will be afforded the same level of protection as an endangered species regulated under the *Endangered Species Act*.

6.4 Cultural Heritage Management

Cultural features, if found, will be evaluated and their significance determined. Those features deemed significant will be protected from incompatible development wherever they occur in the park. Incompatible resource uses and recreational activities will be restricted or prohibited where necessary in accordance with the cultural heritage guidelines in order to protect significant cultural heritage values. Archaeological and historical artefacts may only be removed as part of approved cultural heritage research or management projects by qualified experts subject to Class EA requirements.

The former Kilworth post office has been determined not to be a significant cultural feature and has been declared surplus to park needs. The Ontario Realty Corporation is now responsible for its disposition.

Ontario Parks will continue to work cooperatively with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority toward supporting the Canadian Heritage River designation of the Thames River in areas associated with Komoka Provincial Park.

Although a preliminary archaeological survey of the park was carried out in 1974, further study is required and will be encouraged. Management strategies for any archaeological sites found in the future may range from allowing the sites to evolve without human

interference, to research, excavation, and rehabilitation. All research, protection, and management will be undertaken in consultation with the Ministry of Culture and nearby Aboriginal communities.

7.0 PARK OPERATIONS POLICIES

Komoka Provincial Park will continue to be administered from Port Burwell Provincial Park. Specific direction for the management of all facilities and services at Komoka will be incorporated into the park operating plan for Port Burwell.

In addition to the policies that follow, the operating plan will address such topics as budgets, staffing, maintenance, enforcement, and emergency services. The operating plan will be consistent with this plan and the *Ontario Provincial Parks Minimum Operating Standards*, and will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

Park operations will depend on available funding. To ensure that operations continue to meet the standards of the operating plan, self-serve facilities may be developed, and individual volunteers and partner organizations may be involved in park programs.

Ontario Parks' staff may use motor vehicles and motorboats in the park to the extent necessary for efficient park management and operations. In approving research applications (see Section 7.2), Ontario Parks may authorize researchers to use motor vehicles and motorboats to the extent necessary for research to be conducted safely and efficiently. Both Ontario Parks' staff and approved researchers will conform wherever possible to the restrictions applicable to recreational users. Any other public agency may use any craft or vehicle for emergency services in the park, subject to the approval of the park superintendent.

7.1 Natural Heritage Education

Natural heritage education in provincial parks is intended to develop visitors' awareness and appreciation of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage, fostering a commitment to protecting that heritage for current and future generations. Heritage education opportunities are meant to be educational and recreational, formal and informal, and accessible to all. There are three components of heritage education in parks: information, interpretation, and outdoor recreation. The level of service each park provides depends on its significance and visitation. At Komoka, heritage education will be at the self-use level, however personal service programs will be considered from volunteer groups upon the Superintendents approval.

Natural heritage education will be provided through:

- a park leaflet that will inform visitors about Komoka's natural heritage values and their management and restoration, and the park's recreational and self-guided interpretive opportunities;
- provision of display panels and/or interpretive leaflets on some trails;
- installation of viewing platforms and/or display panels at heritage sites of particular interest elsewhere in the park; and

- commemoration of Osmond Langtvet's contribution to Komoka at an appropriate location in the park.

Natural heritage education about Komoka may also be provided offsite, at any nearby public facilities that provide visitor contact opportunities beyond those available in the park.

7.2 Research

Research by qualified individuals that contributes to knowledge of natural and cultural history and to environmental and recreational management will be encouraged.

All research projects will require the written authorization of Ontario Parks, and must be consistent with Ontario Parks' research policies and all applicable legislation. Research activities will also conform with *Ontario Parks, A Research and Information Strategy (1997)*, in terms of current science, research, and information needs as well as Ontario Parks' priorities. Sites altered by research activities will be rehabilitated as closely as possible to their previous conditions.

The following general fields of research are particularly appropriate to Komoka and will be encouraged:

- landforms, vegetation, fish, wildlife, and archaeology of the park;
- the status and life history requirements of species at risk and other rare species and communities;
- the status and possible overabundance of deer; and
- environmental restoration and management.

7.2.1 *Scientific Collecting*

The collection of fossils, rocks, minerals, archaeological/cultural artefacts, plants, seeds and bioprospecting is permitted by research permit and/or scientific collector permit.

7.2.2 *Inventory and Monitoring*

Planning and management decisions are intended to ensure the ecological sustainability of protected areas (which includes social and economic components). Ontario Parks will ensure that these decisions are made with the best available information. Where this information is lacking, Ontario Parks may conduct inventories and monitoring, as necessary, to provide this information. Such efforts will be undertaken based on established methodologies and best practices. This will foster an adaptive management approach to protected areas management. The following are broad approaches to identifying inventory and monitoring needs: management actions identified in this management plan; public input; routine park maintenance activities; staff knowledge and experiences and environmental scans.

7.3 Recreation Management

Self-service collection of day use fees may be introduced in the access zones if and when the potential revenues would justify the collection costs. Fee collection may also be introduced at the existing interim access points before they are replaced by the Zone A1 access.

There are about 11 km of authorized trails in the park, all south of the Thames River (see Figure 1). This includes the end-to-end 4.4 km "white" trail, which is the Thames Valley Trail link within the park, and the "orange", "blue", and "yellow" systems. There are also about 15 km of unauthorized trails on both sides of the Thames. If the park boundaries are fenced where the Thames Valley Trail enters the park, stiles or similar facilities will be installed that will maintain access for pedestrians only.

Ontario Parks will prepare a trail management plan that will:

- determine which authorized trails should be closed and which should be relocated south of the Thames in order to improve circulation, reduce duplication, allow for more efficient maintenance, and better protect natural and cultural heritage values;
- confirm the continuing role of the trails system in providing a Thames Valley Trail link through the park;
- design an appropriate system of authorized trails north of the Thames;
- determine how unauthorized trails can be most effectively closed and rehabilitated; and
- specify appropriate trails development standards.

Those aspects of the trail management plan that involve the Thames Valley Trail link will be prepared in partnership with the Thames Valley Trail Association.

Cross-country skiing will be permitted on all appropriate trails, but trails will not normally be managed for skiing.

Horseback riding and mountain biking will only be permitted on designated trails for a two year period following the approval of the final *Komoka Park Management Plan*. After this time these activities will no longer be allowed in the park.

Angling in the Thames River will continue to be subject to federal and provincial recreational fishing regulations. Sport hunting is not permitted in the park.

Dogs on-leash will be permitted within the park.

No area will be established in the park for snowmobiling or other all-terrain vehicle use, or for dogs off-leash.

Camping is prohibited in the park.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

All development undertaken by Ontario Parks, or by partners on its behalf, will comply with *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (2004)*, and will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans that meet development standards for provincial parks.

The location, design, and materials of all facilities will as much as possible reflect the natural environment character of the park. Durable, low maintenance, and energy-efficient designs and materials will be used wherever possible.

Ontario Parks will seek to ensure that any alterations by easement holders to the utility easements specified in Section 4.2 and to the utilities within them reflect the natural environment character of the park as much as possible.

Figure 2 shows the specific new developments authorized by this plan, except for trails, which will be authorized by the trail management plan. Within the limits established by this plan, the final location and extent of all development will be determined through site and development planning.

In addition to the parking lots shown in Figure 2, and the access roads to them, the following facilities may be developed in Zones A1 and A2:

- self-service entry control and fee collection;
- bicycle racks;
- individual picnic sites;
- privies;
- display panels and other interpretive facilities;
- garbage disposal; and
- basic management facilities (such as site office, maintenance shed).

The existing park buildings in Zone A1 may be used, renovated, or relocated for these purposes.

Signs will be erected where required, to indicate the basic rules that apply to park use.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

9.1 Implementation Priorities

Ontario Parks will give priority to completing the following initiatives, as funding permits. These initiatives are listed in order of their appearance in this plan, not in any order of rank. Except where indicated otherwise in this plan, or as required by *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*, no further public consultation will be required for the following developments to proceed.

- Survey and regulate new boundary (Section 4.1).

- Define boundary on the ground where required (Section 4.1).

- Remove old internal farm fences (Section 6.1).

- Implement Thames River aquatic ecosystem recovery strategy and action plan as required in the park (Section 6.3).

- Develop park leaflet (Section 7.1).

- Install appropriate viewing platforms and/or display panels, including appropriate commemoration of Osmond Langtvet (Section 7.1).

- Install self-service fee collection if and where justified (Section 7.3).

- Install information signs at access/entry points (Section 8).

In order to manage the park effectively, Ontario Parks will prepare various implementation plans. Priorities will include the resource stewardship plan (Section 6), the trail management plan (Section 7.3), and site and development plans for Zones A1 and A2 (Section 8), as funds permit. Because Zone A2 abuts a sewage treatment facility and associated municipal property, its site and development plan will be undertaken in consultation with the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. All these plans will be made available for public review and comment in advance of approval. Following approval of any implementation plan, initiatives recommended by that plan may be added to the above priority list without amendment to the park management plan.

Park management, development, and operations will depend upon the availability of funding, and could be affected by unforeseeable changes in Ontario Parks or Ontario Government priorities or policies.

In implementing the park management plan and operating the park, Ontario Parks will meet the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Environmental Bill of Rights* and all other applicable legislation. All specific management, development, and operating activities will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

9.2 Partnerships

Ontario Parks will encourage and assist the development of a Friends of Komoka Park organization, if there is sufficient public interest. A Friends organization could be an important partner in implementing plan initiatives such as producing interpretive and marketing materials, improving resource management, and improving trails. Partnerships for these purposes will also be explored with municipalities, Aboriginal communities, other public agencies, community and interest groups, and the private sector.

Existing partnerships to be continued include:

- advisory role in developing Thames River aquatic ecosystem recovery strategy (Government of Canada, conservation authorities, Aboriginal governments); and
- Thames Valley Trail link location and management (Thames Valley Trail Association).

10.0 PLAN AMENDMENT AND REVIEW

After its approval, this park management plan will be reviewed every 10 years, to confirm or revise its policies or to address new issues or changing conditions. A review will require full public consultation.

In the interim, the plan may be amended as needed.

- A major amendment would involve any change that would represent a marked departure from the plan's original intent and direction. Such changes could have significant impacts

on the park's environment, affect users of adjacent lands, or result in significant public reaction. Major amendments will require full public consultation.

- A minor amendment would involve administrative or housekeeping changes that would not alter the plan's intent, affect the park's objectives or its ability to meet those objectives, or have any significant impacts on the park's environment or use. Ontario Parks will determine what, if any, public notice or consultation is needed prior to approval of a minor amendment.

11.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation to Date

The public was first invited to participate in management planning for Komoka Provincial Park in July 2001, through a mailing of notices and *Park Management Plan Terms of Reference* to 170 individuals and groups then known to be interested, advertisements in three area newspapers, and posting on the Environmental Registry web site under the *Environmental Bill of Rights*. The *Terms of Reference* document was also posted on the Ontario Parks web site. Comments on the *Terms of Reference* were invited until September 6, 2001.

An Advisory Committee was also established, to provide advice and recommendations to Ontario Parks and its consultants throughout the planning process. Terms of reference for the advisory committee are included in the *Park Management Plan Terms of Reference*. The advisory committee consists of 12 persons knowledgeable about the park, including representatives of municipal and Aboriginal governments, conservation authorities, environmental groups, recreational user groups, community groups, and the scientific research community.

Although the *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* document was published in September 2003, distribution was delayed due to the October 2003 provincial election and subsequent change of government. In December 2003, the document, and notices of an upcoming open house, were circulated through:

- a mailing to the 317 individuals and groups then on the mailing list;
- 41 additional mailings in response to individual inquiries; and
- distribution of over 125 copies over the counter at Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone, London, and at the open house.

Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options and the open house were also publicized through a posting on the Environmental Registry web site, and advertisements in two area newspapers in January 2004. The document itself was posted on the Ontario Parks web site.

The open house was held at the Komoka Community Centre on January 28, 2004 and was attended by about 160 people.

Comments on *Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options* were invited until February 27, 2004. Ontario Parks received 129 responses. Highlights are

provided in *Komoka Background Information, Issues and Options: Summary of Public Response*, available from Ontario Parks.

11.2 Next Steps

All comments received on this preliminary park management plan will be reviewed by Ontario Parks in consultation with the Advisory Committee. Ontario Parks will then prepare and approve the park management plan for Komoka Provincial Park, taking these comments into account.

12.0 KEY REFERENCES

Resource background studies

All studies except that by Murray and Hammond were published by or for MNR and are available for inspection at Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone, London.

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A Reconnaissance Life Science Inventory of the Komoka Park Reserve and the Komoka Park ANSI, by R. Klinkenberg, 1985.

An Updated Survey and Evaluation of the Life Science Resources of Komoka Provincial Park and Selected Adjacent Areas, by John Ambrose, Gerry Waldron, Lindsay Rodger, and Dave Martin, 2003.

A Preliminary Archaeological Survey of the Proposed Komoka Park Area, by Brian Wolfe, Paul Lennox, and D.M. Stothers, 1974.

Komoka Provincial Park Use Survey: Summary of Results, by Lisa M. Campbell and Andrew Kesteloot, 2002. (Provided as Appendix 3 to *Komoka Provincial Park, Background Information, Issues and Options* - see below for Internet availability.)

Komoka Provincial Park Management Plan: Summary of Background Information Sources, by Ian Seddon Planning Services, 2001.

Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*.
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All documents were prepared by or for MNR except as noted, and are available for inspection at Ontario Parks, London. Some documents are also available on the Internet at the addresses given.

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http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_8198_1.html

The Thames Strategy: Managing the Thames as a Canadian Heritage River, Thames River Coordinating Committee, 2000. Available from Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

A Proposal for the Establishment of a Wilderness Park Straddling the Thames River between the Kilworth and Komoka Bridges, Delaware and Lobo Townships, Middlesex County, Ontario, by Osmond Langtvet, 1964.

Kilworth/Komoka Public Lands (Park Reserve) Interim Management Statement, 1979.

Komoka Provincial Park Management Plan Terms of Reference, 2001.
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Komoka Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Options, by Ian Seddon Planning Services and Anthony Usher Planning Consultant, 2003.
http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/komo_planning.html

Komoka Background Information, Issues and Options: Summary of Public Response, by Ian Seddon Planning Services and Anthony Usher Planning Consultant, 2004.

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